RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Progressive Support and Intervention

The Rhode Island System of Accountability for Schools and Districts

A Blueprint for How Schools, Districts, and RIDE Can Work Together to Improve Learning and Teaching

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This guidance document is meant to serve as a reference for school officials whose schools or districts are targeted for Progressive Support and Intervention (PSI) as a result of being designated as "in need of improvement" through the state's assessment system. The guide first discusses the three elements of the Blueprint for Change: standards, information systems, and tools to ensure effective implementation. The second section describes how PSI teams will integrate the Blueprint for Change with the accountability structure dictated by the state Comprehensive Education Strategy and the No Child Left Behind Act.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Foreword	1
II. Blueprint for Change	3
A. Setting Clear Expectations for Schools and Districts	3
B. Measuring School and District Progress In Improving Student Achievement	4
Rhode Island's Comprehensive Education Information System	4
Generating Multiple Sources of Meaningful Data	4
Collection and Storage of Data	5
Analysis of Relevant Data	6
C. Ensuring Accountability for Results in Terms of Achievement	6
Capacity Building	7
Identification of Successful Practices	7
Professional Development Networks	8
Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance	8
III. Accountability for Schools and Districts in Need of Improvement	10
Classifying Schools and Districts by Student Performance	10
Matching Support to Student Need and School and District Capacity	12
District Accountability	13
The Role of the PSI Team	15
Paying for Reform – Allocation of Resources	15
Appendices	
A – District Expectations for Improving Achievement	17
B – PSI Intervention Schedule for Schools in Need of Improvement	24
C – PSI Intervention Schedule for Districts in Need of Improvement	28

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I. Foreword

Rhode Island's public education agenda is based on the premise that ALL KIDS can achieve at high levels. The Board of Regents established this statewide agenda in the early 1990s. The agenda was affirmed by the broad-based panel that developed Rhode Island's action plan for education: the Comprehensive Education Strategy (CES). The Governor and the General Assembly endorsed the Comprehensive Education Strategy, which has since been implemented through the Rhode Island Student Investment Initiative (Article 31). ¹

The federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) expands upon Rhode Island's existing strategy of standards-based reform. Both the CES and NCLB require statewide student assessments, curriculum and instruction aligned with state standards, high quality teacher preparation and training, and a single accountability structure. The common expectations of these two pieces of legislation promote Rhode Island's intent to integrate the federal and state accountability structures into a single system. The commonality is reflected throughout this document as NCLB requirements are explained within the context of the Rhode Island accountability system.

Article 31 describes two complementary mechanisms for improving student performance: School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT) and Progressive Support and Intervention (PSI). Both mechanisms require schools to use their assessment results to inform their continuing improvement efforts. The SALT process is an annual cycle of school-based improvement activities consisting of self-study, planning, implementing action plans, evaluating programs, and public reporting. PSI is a results-driven system of accountability in which schools and districts that are identified through state assessments as "in need of improvement" become the primary focus of RIDE assistance and oversight.

Progressive Support and Intervention incorporates the CES structure of:

- 1. setting standards;
- 2. developing information systems that measure progress towards those standards; and
- 3. ensuring effective implementation of proven strategies to improve learning.

¹ Chapter 16-7.1, R.I. General Laws.

This coordinated system of school and district accountability is based on the following three core priorities:

☐ Setting high standards and high expectations

Standards-based reform requires clearly defined goals, expressed as measurable outcomes, to which the system or individual is held accountable. Standards for students have been in place for several years. The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) has recently begun to develop standardized expectations for schools and districts as part of its PSI initiative. These expectations and corresponding indicators provide a common frame of reference for defining desired outcomes in seven core areas: instructional leadership; information systems; resource allocation; professional development; parent and community engagement; safe and supportive schools; and integration of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The goal of PSI is to assist school districts to develop the systemic capacity to support their schools in each of these areas, using standardized expectations for schools and districts as a reference point.

Measuring school and student progress

Accountability requires the generation and use of qualitative and quantitative information to document the impact of improvement efforts on student achievement. Whether it is looking at student work, documenting the quality of professional development activities, or measuring the sufficiency and equity of resource allocation, information is at the heart of an effective accountability system. In order to use this information, schools and districts require infrastructure to generate, store, and organize information for the purposes of analysis and reflection. When combined with knowledge of effective practices, information about progress drives effective planning for continuous improvement.

☐ Ensuring accountability for results

Growth requires change. Good planning facilitates effective implementation, but program evaluation is necessary to gauge the impact of improvement activity. Public reporting of the effectiveness of implementation efforts at the school and district levels ensures that the education system is truly accountable for its decision-making and promotes family and community involvement. Knowledge regarding the relative success of improvement efforts results in adjustments to ongoing goal-setting and implementation – either voluntary or imposed. PSI is designed to foster the effective implementation of standards-based reform efforts by using assessment and evaluation to identify successful strategies.

Rhode Island's plan for Progressive Support and Intervention builds upon support already in place and is the logical next step for schools and districts where support alone has proved insufficient. In order to achieve results, PSI is driven by informed analysis about student learning, instructional practices, and school functioning. RIDE respects local conditions and capacity and will tailor interventions to the local context, rather than dictate a one-size-fits-all approach. Rhode Island's accountability structure is designed to engage local schools and districts in on-going partnerships, but RIDE will act assertively on behalf of children where collaboration alone has not produced results. Schools that are most in need of improvement must focus on core academic skills, especially reading, as well as focusing on increasing resources for those students who are not performing well in comparison with their peers.

II. Blueprint for Change

A. Setting Clear Expectations for Schools and Districts

Expectations for Students

Student achievement is the ultimate measure of school performance. Rhode Island's new *Grade Level Expectations (GLE)* establish the expectations for student achievement with which schools and districts must align their curricula, instruction, and assessments. The *Grade Level Expectations* are supplemented by the *Common Core of Learning for the 21st Century (CCL)*, which includes a broad range of educational outcomes, including communication skills and literacy, problem solving, a common body of knowledge, and personal responsibility. In addition to establishing expectations for student achievement, the GLEs and the CCL create a common language shared by districts and RIDE that provides a context for describing the how and why of improvement efforts. These expectations will assist in more accurate planning and higher-quality implementation efforts through the process of inquiry, analysis, and reflection.

Expectations For Schools and Districts

Setting high standards for student achievement is an essential first step in establishing accountability; however, it will not necessarily result in improved learning for all students. An effective accountability system must also set high expectations for schools, school districts, and the state education agency. The Rhode Island Department of Education has developed specific expectations for internal accountability efforts at the school-district level. District-level expectations are designed to support the needs of schools; school-level expectations support the needs of classroom teachers and students. Districts are expected to provide support to their schools in the following seven areas of school and district performance:

- o Leading the Focus on Instruction and Achievement
- Guiding the Selection and Implementation of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
- o Recruiting, Supporting and Retaining High Quality Personnel
- o Engaging Parents and the Community
- o Providing Safe and Supportive Environments for Students
- o Ensuring Equity and Adequacy of Fiscal and Human Resources
- Using Data for Planning and Accountability

A more comprehensive listing of specific expectations within these seven areas, along with corresponding performance indicators, is attached as Appendix A. As with standards for student achievement, these district expectations and indicators will enable RIDE to work with school and district personnel to identify current capacities on a continuum of expectations to better inform allocation of resources, strategic planning, and differentiated instructional supports to schools.

Performance expectations for schools and districts must also be considered in concert with standards for educational professionals and expectations for curriculum development, parent engagement, school safety, and school governance. There is virtually no aspect of education operations that cannot benefit from established standards for content and performance.

B. Measuring School and District Progress in Improving Student Achievement

The *Grade Level Expectations* and the expectations for schools and districts identify data that must be collected and analyzed to measure school and district progress in improving student achievement. These data are in addition to the large quantities of information that RIDE and local school systems currently collect, including data about student demographics, enrollment, attendance, services received, and academic performance. A great deal of information is generated, but the ability to access and analyze that information at school, district, or statewide levels is generally insufficient or cannot be completed within timeframes that make the data useful.

Statewide accountability for student achievement requires the integration of assessment results with other sources of data about student, school, and system performance. The creation of a Comprehensive Education Information System (CEIS) is essential to meeting this goal. The purpose of the CEIS is to ensure that teachers and administrators have the capacity to use information-systems applications to access a broad range of data sources to analyze student results, explore successful practices, and continuously adapt and improve instruction. Compliance with NCLB record-keeping and reporting elements will also be supported by a Comprehensive Education Information System.

Rhode Island's Comprehensive Education Information System

Generation, collection, storage, and analysis of relevant data make up the core elements of a Comprehensive Education Information System (CEIS). An effective accountability system requires accurate information, but information alone does not inform, and data do not "drive" decision-making. What is needed is effective, informed analysis based on a rich variety of data from multiple sources. The information must be current, accurate, and reliable, and should include both quantitative and qualitative measures. Information must be generated, collected, and stored before it can be analyzed. These logistical considerations represent a serious impediment to moving toward a more sophisticated – and accurate – real-time system of performing needs assessment at the student, school, and district levels.

Generating Multiple Sources of Meaningful Data

An effective accountability system requires information from multiple sources to inform analysis of the many aspects of education systems. Relevant data may be grouped into four categories:²

- Contextual and demographic data, including student characteristics such as family income status, mobility, race/ethnicity, gender, LEP status, truancy, attendance, discipline referrals, and graduation rate, as well as school characteristics such as school enrollment, structure, scheduling, class size, parent participation, teacher certification, and teacher assignments;
- **Measures of student learning**, consisting primarily of state assessment results, local assessments, student work, and teachers' observations;

² See, Bernhardt, V. (1999). *The School Portfolio: A Comprehensive Framework for School Improvement*, Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

- **Instructional practices**, such as curriculum, student interventions, professional development and mentoring supports, common planning activities, and evidence of standards-based instruction; and
- **Perceptual** or **evaluative** data provided by self-study, surveys, Learning Support Indicators, mission statements, observations, and structured school visits.³

The combination of data from these four sources to facilitate analysis of the impact of instructional practices and support mechanisms on student learning is the key to an effective Comprehensive Education Information System.

Collection and Storage of Data

RIDE will increasingly focus its resources on developing the state's information infrastructure to support informed educational decisions and investments. Integral to quality information systems at the school, district, and state levels is the continued development of eRIDE. eRIDE is the Department's latest initiative to streamline data collection and information management in order to build and support a Comprehensive Education Information System. eRIDE interfaces with the existing local information infrastructure and provides a secured portal for each district and school to submit or upload data through a single pipeline, thereby dramatically improving the efficiency, accuracy, and timeliness in data collection throughout the state.

The implementation of eRIDE is contingent on the creation of a State Assigned Student Identifier (SASID). The establishment of unique student identifiers will simplify data compliance with NCLB, streamline information gathering and dissemination statewide, and systematize efforts to track students, programs, and large-scale reform efforts. For the first time, RIDE and districts will be able to analyze data longitudinally, track student transfer and mobility trends, sort testing data from multiple years according to a variety of contextual factors, and monitor pre- and post-schooling outcomes. The SASID system needs to be implemented and fully supported by December 2003. Once student identifiers are assigned and integrated into local information systems, the next step is to integrate SASID into every student-level and program-level data-collection system. For the first time, program-based data collections, state reference exams, local assessments, and systems-output data will be submitted with Web-based forms or a set of Web-based utilities with internal validation. Phase II is scheduled for completion by June 2004.

The third step will be to create interactive data warehousing to allow state and local data to be searched and compared across multiple databases. The comprehensive information system requires the replacement of outdated, insular storage systems that inhibit or prevent sharing of data from different sources. Only by pooling data from a wide variety of sources can educators create evidence-based improvement plans and assess progress using multiple measures. The state-supported Data Warehouse will grow over time, but Phase III should be fully implemented by December 2004

³ Organized visit tools include guided self-study, school-level SALT visits, NEASC accreditation visits, Special Education School Support visits, PSI reviews and analysis based on the new District Expectations, and Central Office Review for Results and Equity (CORRE), a new initiative developed by the Annenberg Institute for School Reform and piloted in Rhode Island through a RIDE partnership.

5

Analysis of Relevant Data

Once student, school, and district-level data are collected and stored together, the key challenge is the creation of easy-to-use tools to facilitate analysis of the vast array of information stored in the Data Warehouse. On-Line Analytical Processing (OLAP) tools enable educators to track student performance with regard to state standards, to analyze the effectiveness of program interventions, and to gauge the efficacy of specific investment strategies. RIDE will be developing a series of different OLAP tools for different purposes. An OLAP tool that supports comparison of student-level data may work quite differently from one designed to compare results at a school, district, or demographic level. RIDE is working with external partners to develop prototypes for a variety of OLAP tools. Though some analytical processing tools will become available by late 2004, a full array of OLAP tools will be completed by June 2005.

C. Ensuring Accountability for Results in Terms of Achievement

Internal accountability for continuous improvement requires an understanding of the complex and overlapping operations at work in schools and school systems. All schools share a general responsibility to understand how well their students are learning and to improve their teaching and school environments on the basis of this information. Districts are similarly responsible for providing their schools with sufficient leadership, capacity, and resources to meet these goals. RIDE, in turn, is responsible for ensuring that schools and districts carry out these responsibilities, particularly in schools where student need is the greatest.

The job of administrative leaders is primarily about enhancing the skills and knowledge of people in the organization, creating a common culture of expectations around the use of those skills and knowledge, holding the various pieces of the organization together in a productive relationship with each other, and holding individuals accountable for their contributions to the collective result. ⁴

Focusing on standards and collecting and analyzing information is of little use if the actions generated by these actions are poorly designed or ineffectively implemented. The essence of accountability lies in knowing what to do when confronted with evidence that efforts to improve performance are not meeting expectations. Too often, change efforts fail to progress beyond establishing goals and measuring progress. They never clearly identify and effect the changes necessary to achieve the goals. Progressive Support and Intervention is designed to assure that schools and districts working collaboratively with RIDE interrogate the process of change in order to develop common understandings about why improvement efforts succeed or fail. Only through these actions will schools and districts foster the development of the sustained effective practices essential to achieving results.

Ensuring accountability requires more than the development of a plan. It demands changes within the school and district, new knowledge, new resources, and a willingness to constantly examine and reexamine results as plans are put into action. Specifically, the development of a process for achieving results in terms of achievement must address the following four critical steps:

⁴Elmore, R.F., (2000). *Building a New Structure for School Leadership*. Wash., D.C.: Albert Shanker Institute, p.15.

- Capacity-building in the district and in the school;
- Identification of successful practices that have potential within the district and its schools;
- Capitalizing on professional-development networks as resources within the state; and
- Program evaluation and quality assurance as action plans are developed and implemented.

Capacity-Building

The ultimate goal of Progressive Support and Intervention is to develop a district's capacity to guide and manage sustained and effective reform efforts. Building capacity has two distinct components. First is the development of infrastructure sufficient to execute the requisite tasks. Second is the overlay of quality assurance to ensure that the mechanism being implemented is achieving its desired results. Strategic capacity-building requires analysis, expertise, resources, and on-going commitments. PSI is designed to allow RIDE to work collaboratively with districts in the process of capacity-building in ways that capitalize on the respective skills of each institution.

District support and intervention should vary its intensity in relation to the ability of the school to address the learning needs of the students in the school. RIDE will assess the capacity of a district to provide its schools with support, considering the extent to which district personnel are able to help their schools to:

- Assess and understand the learning needs of the students in the school;
- Make good decisions about how to create changes that will address those needs;
- Implement those changes; and
- Learn from the change process so that future change efforts become more effective.

Districts with schools in need of improvement will be required to demonstrate to RIDE that they have sufficient capacity to oversee their school-improvement efforts. Through the PSI initiative, RIDE will work with district leadership to ensure that meaningful strategies for improving student achievement are implemented at the classroom, school, and district levels. The relationship between RIDE and the district will be one of collaboration to achieve results. RIDE will continue to evaluate annually the district's ability to build capacity. Although the relationship will begin through a partnership, failure to increase student performance to target levels will result in an increased state role on a year-to-year basis. The primary mechanism for this PSI role will occur in conjunction with the CRP approval process, in order to redirect federal and state resources to meet needs identified in the district strategic plan.

Identification of Successful Practices

School leaders need to see the "big picture" of co-existing systems in order to be able to think strategically over a period of years. Systemic support for practice-embedded instructional strategies requires an awareness of effective approaches to student support, parent engagement, professional development, fiscal planning, leadership development, and creation of effective information systems. Districts need to continue to develop the knowledge base of school administrators and teachers about successful practices, especially practices that have been successful in similar schools. The school leaders responsible for improving achievement cannot be expected to create new practice, but to become more knowledgeable about what research exists and is applicable to their contexts. RIDE's role in supporting districts comes through its efforts to continue to identify key elements of successful strategies to improve student performance and to ensure that successful practices are widely known and understood.

Although RIDE is capable of disseminating a range of successful practices, schools are often in a better position to determine which practices are most likely to be effective in their own contexts. Whenever possible, schools should review and select proven strategies that have worked in similar contexts. These may be programs or other activities whose effectiveness have been scientifically demonstrated or activities that have worked in other schools with similar characteristics. In order to help schools see the range of proven or demonstrated changes that exists, districts need to be well informed about the potential solutions that exist to the multiple problems schools will want to address. RIDE will work with districts to build this capacity or to otherwise supply it to their schools so that schools can make good choices about the changes they want to make.

Professional Development Networks

The Rhode Island system of accountability in public education is designed to work in all schools and to focus on those schools where student learning is weakest. A major component of the PSI strategy is the use of master teachers as Instructional Fellows to target instructional practices in ways that increase learning opportunities for all students. RIDE has instituted a program through which accomplished Rhode Island educators join the department as Regents' Fellows for several years to support educational change throughout the state. Regents' Fellows focus on ongoing, embedded professional-development opportunities through the maintenance of networks of schools and educators to provide continuous training and feedback throughout the school year. RIDE's Instructional Fellows bring expertise in many areas that can support schools in need of improvement, including reading, mathematics, differentiated instruction, high-school restructuring, and the SALT Process. Their current assignments include the following responsibilities:

- Reading Fellows support schools participating in Literacy Networks by providing professional development that aligns comprehensive literacy with the Grade Level Expectations developed through the New England Compact.
- Mathematics Fellows work with networks of middle schools to address the teaching of learning of mathematics through Grade Level Expectations and conceptual understanding.
- Diverse Learning Fellows focus on differentiating instruction through a problem-solving approach to designing effective interventions to close gaps in student learning, especially in regard to students with disabilities.
- High School Fellows assist schools and districts to develop literacy plans and address the need to personalize instruction and learning environments.
- SALT Fellows facilitate the work of School Improvement Teams and help to train the network of District School Improvement Coordinators.

Instructional Fellows who provide direct support to teachers and instructional leaders to shape the integration of standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment represent one area of professional development support by RIDE that is available to assist districts in ensuring that action plans result in achievement of their goals.

Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance

Once schools have determined what changes they will make during the year, they need to specify those changes in the form of action plans. Action plans operationalize quality control by defining goals as outcomes that can be evaluated in a reliable and consistent manner.

Developing Effective Action Plans

- 1. Outline the major steps that lead to the desired result.
- 2. Put those steps on a timeline.
- 3. Assign responsibility for each action as specifically as possible.
- 4. List the resources (money, time, technical assistance, and other support) that will be required.
- 5. Describe the intended result of the action plan as a measurable outcome.

The development of an action plan, like the development of a lesson plan, is only a first step in achieving results. As the plan unfolds, either through action or through teaching, there is always a need to monitor and adjust the plan. The implementation lends itself to the collection of additional data that are used to evaluate both progress and the plan itself. These data allow for both formative and summative evaluation and, based upon analysis and reflection, lead to next steps. The ongoing cycle of questioning, analyzing, and reflecting is essential to assuring quality results as plans are implemented.

Quality assurance and program evaluation rest on an understanding of the complex and overlapping forces at work in schools and school systems. Analysis of a school's demographic, achievement, instructional, and systems-evaluation data against specific strategic-reform goals is the key to ongoing self-study that accurately measures the effectiveness of individual action plans. PSI teams will work with districts to develop their capacity to gauge the nature and extent of support required to implement new instructional programs. This evaluative work is the key to moving from "pockets of excellence" to systemic improvement through longitudinal studies, cohort comparisons, and evaluation of specific reform strategies.

III. Accountability for Schools and Districts in Need of Improvement

The goal of Rhode Island's system of accountability for schools and districts is the improvement of teaching and learning through the use of inquiry-based practices at the classroom, school, and district levels. As John Dewey observed at the turn of the last century, effective reform requires evidence-based analysis of existing needs, followed by directed, differentiated responses to meet those needs. Closing student achievement gaps requires a shared

It is our American habit if we find the foundations of our educational structure unsatisfactory to add another story or wing. We find it easier to add a new study or course or kind of school than to recognize existing conditions so as to meet the need.⁵

commitment to building a culture of inquiry-based decision-making. Students, teachers, parents, and administrators must assume responsibility for closing achievement gaps by creating plans to improve learning. Accountability occurs when the effectiveness of those plans is evaluated and the causes of success or failure are identified and addressed in a cycle of continuous improvement.

Classifying Schools and Districts by Student Performance

Rhode Island has incorporated the accountability requirements set forth in the No Child Left Behind Act into its existing state system set forth in the Comprehensive Education Strategy (CES). This unified system now serves as the basis for classifying schools and districts based on the number of students who meet Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) on the state assessments for English language arts and mathematics. The required goal of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is a moving target – the Annual Measurable Objective increases over time in order to reach 100% proficiency by the year 2014.

Based on the state assessments, Rhode Island classifies every school and district in the state as high performing, moderately performing, or "in need of improvement." Schools and districts that are classified as "in need of improvement" and making "insufficient progress" are in the greatest need of assistance. Any district that has a school with an indicator below the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) enters the Progressive Support and Intervention process. Progressive Support and Intervention is designed to strengthen the capacity of districts to support their schools' improvement efforts.

Schools and districts are held accountable for aggregate student performance, as well as for disaggregated data on the achievement levels of identified populations. There are also three "additional indicators" – participation rate on each of the two state assessments, and attendance/graduation rate as measured by the attendance rate in elementary and middle schools and the graduation rate for high schools. Altogether, there are 21 performance criteria for school performance required under NCLB. Data will be analyzed at both the school and the district level. Falling short on **any one criterion** results in a school's or district's being categorized as "in need of improvement." The twenty-one AMOs are summarized in the table that follows:

⁵ Dewey, J.; "Universal Service As Education," The New Republic (1916).

⁶ NCLB mandates accountability for students identified by race/ethnicity, disability, low family income, and limited English proficiency. The federal act also requires reporting of achievement levels by gender and migratory status.

Criteria Used to Classify Schools and Districts as "In Need of Improvement"			
Type	Population	Annual Measurable Objectives	
Academic:	School Level-Achievement Data from NSRE	NSRE English Language Arts Performance NSRE Mathematics Performance	
	Group Level Achievement Data from NSRE Race/Ethnicity African American American Indian/Native Alaskan Asian/Pacific Islander Hispanic White Students with Disabilities Limited English Proficiency Economically Disadvantaged	For each of the eight disaggregated student groups 3-10. NSRE English Language Arts Performance 11-18. NSRE Mathematics Performance	
Non- Academic	Attendance/Graduation Elementary Schools – Attendance Middle Schools/Junior High Schools – Attendance High Schools - Graduation	19. Attendance Rate/Graduation Rate	
	Participation rate in NSRE	20. Percent of students are included in NSREEnglish Language Arts Examination21. Percent of students are included in NSREMathematics Examination	

As the number of indicators below the AMO (gaps) remains unchanged for longer periods of time, or increases, the level of attention, support, and intervention also increases and, by extension, the progressive support and intervention associated with the school category changes, bringing in more outside oversight, support, and intervention. Further, there are significant differences between schools-based upon the number of indicators below the AMO and the number of years those indicators have been below the AMO. These differences are used to create distinctions in the nature and extent of oversight and intervention over time.

In addition to the general principles of Progressive Support and Intervention, schools receiving Title I funds are subject to an additional set of requirements imposed by the No Child Left Behind Act. Consecutive years without demonstrated improvement result both in an increased call for action and

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⁷ For a more detailed description of the Rhode Island system of state assessments and school and district classifications, consult *School and District Performance and Accountability System – Technical Assistance Bulletin.* See www.ridoe.net - 2003 School Report Cards.

in decreased local authority. The expectations range from developing a two-year plan to turn the school around and school choice through the expectation of provision of supplemental educational services for students to corrective action and restructuring. Each of these actions is described in detail in the NCLB legislation and they are summarized in the following table:

Required School Improvement Actions Under NCLB			
Time	Action		
2 consecutive years without improvement	Develop two year school improvement plan to turn school around Students offered within-district choice		
3 consecutive years without improvement	Students access supplemental services		
4 consecutive years without improvement	Undergoes district initiated <i>corrective action</i> , defined as taking at least one of the following actions: • Replace the school staff most relevant to the failure of the school to improve • Fully implement curriculum based on scientific research, including professional development • Decrease management authority of school • Appoint outside advisor to the school • Extend the school day or year • Restructure internal organization of the school		
5 consecutive years without improvement	Undergoes restructuring, defined as taking at least one of the following actions: Reopen the school as a charter school Replace all or most of the staff Place school under private management Place school under RIDE management Restructure staffing or governance		

How each school is classified is much less important than how it responds to its classification. Accountability is about closing gaps in student learning through systemic efforts that build capacity for continuous improvement. PSI is results-driven, based on informed analysis about student learning and instructional practices, which in turn leads to differentiated responses and demands. Specific timetables for the annual phases of the Progressive Support and Intervention system for school accountability are set forth in Appendix B.

Matching Support to Student Need and School and District Capacity

Student need is measured by both breadth – the number of student achievement gaps measured against AMOs; and depth – the extent of each gap, i.e., the distance the student population must move to achieve proficiency. The number of gaps, coupled with the extent of each gap, creates a measure of the magnitude of student need. Schools with the highest measures of student need will be the highest priority for the PSI system.

In high-priority schools, RIDE will dedicate its resources to implementing short-term solutions and to developing long-term school and district capacity. In schools that have more moderate levels of student need, RIDE will exercise correspondingly lesser degrees of oversight.

The accountability framework set forth in NCLB is heavily dependent on the ability of school districts to implement and manage improvement efforts within their schools. The capacity of schools

and districts to fulfill that function on their own is therefore a critical factor in determining the extent of RIDE involvement through the PSI process. Measurement of the nature and extent of student achievement gaps, followed by assessment of school and district capacity, form the first step in the systemic PSI response to school classifications.

District Accountability

The Rhode Island system of Assessment and Accountability focuses on student achievement at the school level. However, PSI is also concerned with establishing accountability at the district level for districts in which large numbers of students are failing to meet Annual Measurable Objectives. Districts that have 40% or more of their schools subject to progressive support and intervention will be designated as districts in need of improvement. District-level analysis will also attend to specific district populations that may not have been analyzed at the school level. The application of NCLB criteria to student populations (e.g., racial or ethnic groups, students with disabilities) where there were fewer than 45 students at the school level, thereby precluding statistically significant analysis, will be analyzed at the district level. If there are at least 45 students in a given group within the district, performance data from these students is aggregated at the district level. The district is identified as "in need of improvement" if the district's students fail to meet any of the 21 performance indicators at two of the three grade-span levels (grades 4, 8, and 10).

School districts that are identified as "in need of improvement" for consecutive years will face increasingly stringent oversight from RIDE through progressive support and intervention. That is the concept underlying "progressive intervention." The No Child Left Behind Act mandates that state accountability systems require districts to take certain corrective actions after two years of identification as a district "in need of improvement." Corrective actions for districts are specifically designed by RIDE to address staffing, curriculum, or capacity problems that underlie the district's inability to bring student performance on the state assessment to the achievement levels reflected in the annual measurable objectives.

If RIDE identifies a district for corrective action, NCLB mandates that the state must continue to make available technical assistance to the district, as well as take at least one corrective action from a prescribed list, as set forth in this table:

NCLB Corrective Actions For Districts In Need Of Improvement

- Defer programmatic funds or reduce administrative funds.
- Institute and fully implement a new curriculum based on state and local content and academic achievement standards, including the provision of appropriate professional development for all relevant staff that--
 - (A) Is grounded in scientifically based research; and
 - (B) Offers substantial promise of improving educational achievement for low-achieving students.
- Replace local education agency (LEA) personnel who are relevant to the failure to make AYP.
- Remove particular schools from the jurisdiction of the LEA and establish alternative arrangements for public governance and supervision of these schools.
- Appoint a receiver or trustee to administer the affairs of the LEA in place of the superintendent and school board.
- Abolish or restructure the LEA.
- In conjunction with at least one other action in paragraph (c)(2) of this section--
 - (A) Authorize students to transfer from a school operated by the district to a higher-performing public school operated by another school district, and
 - (B) Provide to these students transportation, or the costs of transportation, to the other school.⁸

The authority granted state departments of education by the above provisions closely mirrors the language contained in "Article 31," Chapter 16-7.1 of the Rhode Island General Laws.

If after a three (3) year period of support there has not been improvement in the education of students as determined by objective criteria to be developed by the board of regents, then there shall be progressive levels of control by the department of elementary and secondary education over the school and/or district budget, program, and/or personnel. This control by the department of elementary and secondary education may be exercised in collaboration with the school district and the municipality. If further needed, the school shall be reconstituted. Reconstitution responsibility is delegated to the board of regents and may range from restructuring the school's governance, budget, program, personnel, and/or may include decisions regarding the continued operation of the school.⁹

In most cases, corrective action will begin with state oversight of expenditure of state and federal funds that are governed by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and Chapter 16-7.1. Progressive intervention would then address programming, professional development, school structure, and other capacity issues. Only then would RIDE address issues of personnel and, ultimately, governance. Specific timetables for the annual phases of the Progressive Support and Intervention system for district accountability are set forth in Appendix C.

The prospect of corrective action does not change the values and purpose of the progressive-supportand-intervention process. The aim of RIDE is to ensure that every school is ably and adequately

⁸ 20 U.S.C. § 63116.

⁹ Section 16-7.1-5, R.I. Gen. Laws.

supported by its district, that the tenets of School Accountability for Learning and Teaching and the mission of the Comprehensive Education Strategy are implemented across the state. The goal of Rhode Island's system of school and district accountability is self-sufficiency – internal accountability for effective school improvement.

The Role of the PSI Team

The primary mechanism for implementing the principles of progressive support and intervention is the use of PSI teams to assist schools and districts to improve their capacity to generate continuous improvement in student achievement. In order to do this, the PSI team must assess the capacity of each school to deliver instruction and support its students. The team must also assess the capacity of the district to support its schools. This process of information-gathering and analysis leads to conclusions about the kinds of things that schools, the district, and RIDE can do to improve education in the district. The PSI team forms plans with the district and schools to put these conclusions into action. After implementation of these action plans by the team, district, and school, the outcomes of the change efforts are evaluated and discussed by the three parties. These discussions identify those practices that led to success, those that did not, and areas for future investigation.

Each PSI team shall consist of persons "knowledgeable about scientifically based research and practice on teaching and learning" and school reform. The PSI teams will include RIDE staff specialists, highly qualified or distinguished teachers and principals, pupil-services personnel, parents, representatives of institutions of higher learning, representatives of regional learning laboratories or technical assistance centers, and other representatives of outside consultant groups or other individuals as RIDE, in consultation with the district, deems appropriate.

The PSI team will develop a detailed diagnosis of the problems facing the district and its schools. The analysis will rely upon a wide range of all available data, including In\$ite fiscal data, local and state assessment results, observations, student information systems, surveys, and visit reports. The work of the PSI team is organized into a cycle of investigation, planning, work, and evaluation, which takes place at the school and district level. PSI teams focus on district capacity-building and work through the district to reach schools. In this way, both the PSI team and the district will help schools to conduct a managed improvement process that results in better learning for all students and in closing gaps for those students with substantial learning needs.

Paying for Reform – Allocation of Resources

School districts are required to submit an annual Consolidated Resource Plan (CRP) to RIDE for review and approval. In the CRP, the district specifies how it will spend its available federal resources and state aid Student Investment Initiative Funds. The RIDE review analyzes how well the plan for expenditure presented in the CRP aligns with the strategic work described in the action plans of the District Strategic Plan and to what degree those plans reflect the needs of students, teachers, and schools in the district.

Beginning in the next fiscal year, CRP reviews will be increasingly integrated with the process of progressive support and intervention. RIDE approval of planned expenditures in districts classified as "in need of improvement" will require evidence of effective needs assessment and implementation of quality-assurance measures in keeping with the evidence-based nature of PSI. RIDE will exercise its authority over these funds to ensure that they are being appropriately targeted, effectively used, and credibly evaluated. In a related shift from past practice, RIDE will increasingly use discretionary

funding, such as Title I School Improvement funds, to supplement the reform efforts of districts that lack fiscal capacity for needed infrastructure, systems development, and professional development.

Depending upon the shortcomings that RIDE identifies as barriers to improving student performance, RIDE will negotiate an agreement with the district governing how these funds may be spent. This Negotiated District Agreement may contain such elements as changes in instruction to embed standards-based teaching practices, revision of fiscal structures and systems for the district and/or schools, revision of administrative structures, and redesign of personnel policies, hiring practices, or purchasing structures. Some issues may impact on ancillary systems of municipal support, policy and governance, and collective bargaining. Each district will face different challenges and barriers to improved student performance, and each Negotiated District Agreement will be crafted to reflect those unique needs.

A. Leading the Focus on Learning and Achievement

EXPECTATIONS

- 1. The superintendent and school committee articulate an achievement-oriented vision for all students and all district schools.
- 2. The superintendent and school committee articulate expectations about the roles and responsibilities of instructional leaders and school improvement teams.
- The superintendent takes responsibility for keeping the school community informed about emerging research and best practices in education.
- 4. The school committee and superintendent identify potential barriers to learning at individual schools, put in place plans to overcome those barriers, and identify community resources to meet identified needs.
- 5. The superintendent intervenes with schools that are failing to make adequate yearly progress toward instructional priorities and provides support and assistance to school staff.

school introduction and real entry in the state of the st decess to and use current information about each set of The district has adopted and uses comprehensive written The school committee has adopted and considering uses The superintendent designs central office such to over see school in stood notice and and so to delight to the state of the state Principals touchers, landies, and community mondoers liker act mathematics and school and a dispred with ore lamited with and some standard and the planning through a standard and the planning through the lamited and the second and the planning through the second and the seco the intervention steps associated with advert progress. Student Rearning Books and grade level estre difficults in policies and broadures, to guide instructional leaders The central office has a process in place to work with On sethod action banks. John all earlies are aware of identify broatiles for thanking student performance improvement in the construction of the land of the lan The district strategic plan and school action plans Shuden assessment, results show continuous

INDICATORS

B. Ensuring Equity of and Adequacy of Fiscal and Human Resources

EXPECTATIONS

- 1. The school committee and superintendent identify and acquire high quality resources to support instructional priorities that meet the identified needs of different groups of students.
- 2. The school committee and superintendent allocate fiscal and human resources, including time, based on the needs of students.
- 3. The central office coordinates fiscal resources from local, state, and federal funding streams (Title I, Title II, special education) as well as human resources to meet priority instructional goals.
- 4. The school committee and superintendent give schools flexibility in use of resources to meet instructional priorities, and require budget plans to link expenditures to anticipated outcomes.

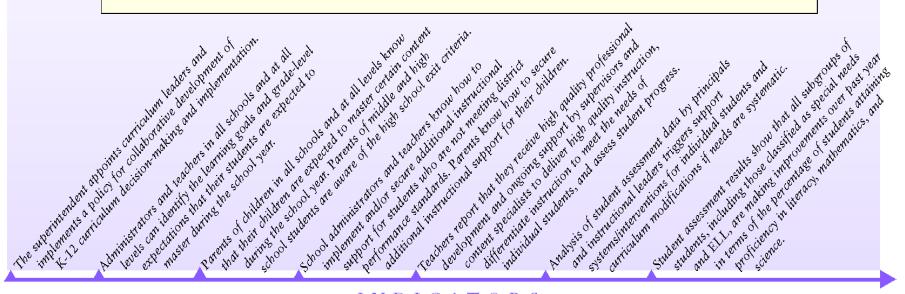
Consolidated Resource Than and the school budgets dearly Principals report that they have the nathority to allocate priorities for introduces and how here sure the standard section of the second section of the sec All sources of information about extenditures e.g., the Show briorities for interestant good to this trid and school Financial indestructured de desons at the district level and resound share been reallow deed if ask broad he's are not of the office on based on suidence of past or potential At least some invostments of resources have resulted The district has a systematic process for identifying leaders report that they have entoured by doors, the Board nambers administrators and instructional Budgest reference the district's strategic plan and directly in landing of the days sufficient to reduce resources day by used, and how resources are

INDICATORS

C. Guiding the Selection and Implementation of Curriculum/Instruction/Assessment

EXPECTATIONS

- 1. The central office and school committee develop and implement an articulated PreK-12 curriculum for all students that meets or exceeds state-mandated content and performance standards.
- 2. The central office requires, finances, and supports differentiated instructional strategies, materials, and assessments to ensure that all students have opportunities to meet state and district performance standards. The central office provides information
- that teachers can use to redirect and focus their instruction to address the full range of students.
- 3. The central office implements in each school multiple measures for evaluation and assessment of learning that are frequent, rigorous, and aligned with the district curriculum.
- 4. The school committee has approved performance-based exit criteria for high school graduation.



INDICATORS

D. Recruiting, Supporting, and Retaining Highly Qualified Staff

EXPECTATIONS

- 1. The school committee has formalized and negotiated a range of incentives and strategies to recruit, hire, and retain highly qualified district and school personnel for all schools, paying particular attention to staffing low performing schools with highly qualified and experienced staff.
- The school committee retains only high quality district and school personnel who have demonstrated an adequate level of performance as determined by district standards.
- 3. The central office creates a cohesive system of high quality professional development, including setting priorities, supporting and evaluating school-based professional development plans, and providing opportunities for all school personnel to participate.
- 4. The central office requires all instructional and supervisory staff to participate in professional development that is curriculum-focused, researchbased, and designed to address areas of low student achievement.

determined by district standards.

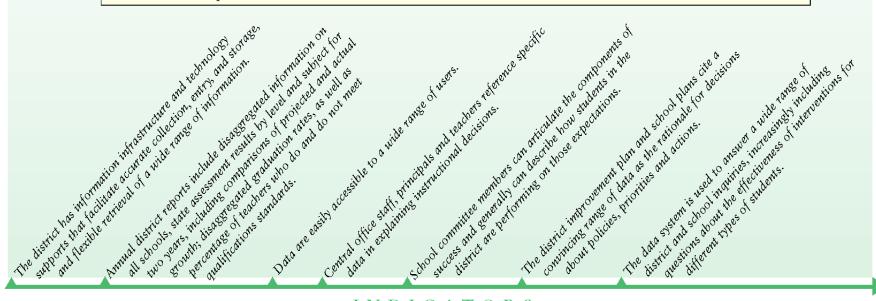
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INDICATORS

E. Using Information for Planning and Accountability

EXPECTATIONS

- 1. The superintendent and school committee evaluate school progress and student performance to ensure that the district's vision, strategic mission, and supporting goals and objectives have been implemented effectively.
- The central office collects, analyzes and uses data to plan instruction, to set instructional priorities, to allocate resources, and to be accountable for student performance.
- 3. The superintendent provides professional development and ongoing support on interpreting and using data to school staff, members of school improvement teams, and other individuals or groups responsible for school planning.



INDICATORS

F. Engaging Families and Community

EXPECTATIONS

- The superintendent and school committee actively work together to involve families and the community in promoting student achievement.
- 2. The superintendent proactively informs families about educational opportunities within the school system, including public school choice options and the availability of supplemental services in schools in need of improvement, and, with respect to Title I schools, facilitates transfers to higher performing schools in the district.
- 3. The superintendent communicates directly with families of children about learning expectations, student outcomes, and the quality of schools and teachers.
- 4. The superintendent and central office actively support schools in working effectively with families and the community in promoting student achievement.

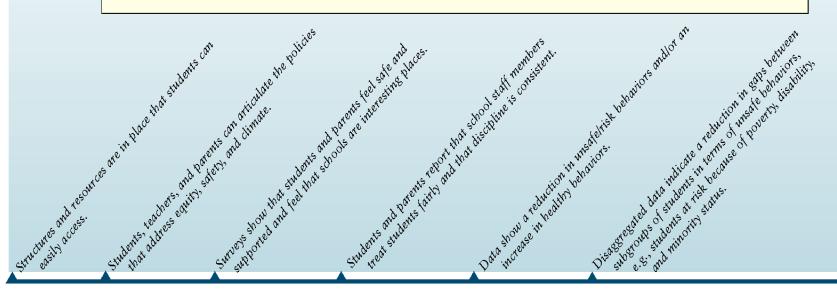
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INDICATORS

G. Ensuring Safe and Supportive Environments for Students

EXPECTATIONS

- 1. The superintendent develops and implements data-driven and research-based programs for addressing the physical, social, and emotional needs of students that are affecting their academic performance.
- 2. The school committee and superintendent create safe school facilities and stimulating learning environments to support student achievement.
- The superintendent develops and implements programs and procedures for preventing school violence, fostering a drug-free learning environment, and ensuring civil preparedness.



INDICATORS

Progressive Support and Intervention Intervention Schedule for SCHOOLS In Need of Improvement

First Year of Designation as a School in Need of Improvement

All schools in need of improvement:

Within 3 months of identification, review and refocus their school improvement plans. School improvement plans must:

- Demonstrate meaningful community engagement
- Be based on evidence-driven self-study
- Incorporate district strategies to improve student achievement levels
- Incorporate evidence-based or research-based strategies
- Adopt policies and practices concerning the school's core academic subjects that have the greatest likelihood raising student achievement
- Create action plans that address how the school will close its student achievement gaps
- Specify the responsibilities of the school, district and RIDE, including the provision of ongoing technical assistance
- Describe strategies to promote effective parent involvement in the school
- Incorporate, as appropriate, activities before school, after school, during the summer, and any extension of the school year
- Incorporate a teacher mentoring program

School Improvement Plans for Title I schools add:

- Cover a 2-year period
- Assure that the school will spend not less than 10% of its Title I funds on high-quality professional development that addresses the school's student achievement gaps
- Describe how the school will provide written notice about the school's classification and teacher qualifications to parents of each student enrolled in the school
- Offer parents intra-district choice, and set aside at least 5% of its Title I funds to support choice initiatives

Districts

- Must work with the school to develop action plans and support program evaluation
- Provide technical assistance in analyzing data, identifying and implementing professional development, and analyzing and revising the school budget
- Support and resource each identified school's action plans
- Review each identified school's improvement plan within 45 days of submission

RIDE PSI team

- Reviews student and school-level data to isolate causes of student achievement gaps
- Analyzes school and district capacity to address achievement gaps
- Reviews and approves both school and district action plans
- Forms a Negotiated District Agreement to ensure adequate support to the identified school

Second Year of Designation as a School in Need of Improvement

All schools in need of improvement:

- Continue annual cycle of self-study, planning, implementation, evaluation, and public reporting
- Create specific plans to address continuing areas of student achievement gaps
- Continue support of teacher mentoring program

Title I schools add:

- Continued choice and district technical assistance to school,
- District makes Supplemental Educational Services available to students,
- District set-aside of 20% of its Title I funds for choice and supplemental services
- Continue to provide parental notice regarding teacher qualifications and school classifications

Districts

- Continue to develop action plans and support program evaluation
- Provide ongoing technical assistance in analyzing data, identifying and implementing professional development, and analyzing and revising the school budget
- Support and resource each identified school's action plans

RIDE PSI team

- Within 3 months of identification RIDE PSI team assigns small intervention teams to work with school, attends SIT meetings with DSIC
- RIDE conducts training and support for principal, SIT chair, DSIC

Third Year of Designation as a School in Need of Improvement

All schools in need of improvement

- Adopt prescribed course for teachers in standards-based, learning-differentiated instruction
- Submits formal report on status of school improvement efforts to PSI team

Title I schools add:

- District institutes corrective action, including at least one of the following:
 - Replacing staff,
 - o Implement new curriculum,
 - o Reduce school management authority,
 - o Appoint outside expert,
 - o Extend school day or year, or
 - o Restructure school
- Maintain existing 20% set-aside and support for school choice and supplemental educational services
- Continue to provide parental notice regarding teacher qualifications and school classifications

Districts

- Continue to provide technical assistance
- Implement mandated DSIC responsibilities
- District evaluates action plans

RIDE PSI team

- RIDE, DSIC, SIT write and implement corrective action plan
- Develops Negotiated Agreement to build district capacity to oversee school improvement efforts

Fourth Year of Designation as a School in Need of Improvement

All schools in need of improvement

- Implement corrective action plan dictated by school district
- Continue to implement and evaluate action plans aimed at closing student achievement gaps

Title I schools add:

- Maintain existing 20% set-aside and support for school choice and supplemental educational services
- Participate in the development of a plan for restructuring the school
- Implement technical assistance from district
- Continue to provide parental notice regarding teacher qualifications and school classifications

Districts

- Decide on scope of district-level involvement in re-writing SIP
- Participate in the development of a plan for restructuring the school

RIDE PSI team

- RIDE, DSIC, SIT develop plan for restructuring school (**Title I**), which must include at least one of the following:
 - o Reopen school as a public charter school
 - o Replace key staff members, including principal
 - o Enter into contract with private management entity to run school
 - o Appoint mentor to assist principal
 - o Transfer jurisdiction of school to another LEA
 - o State takeover, or
 - Other major restructuring of school's governance structure
- PSI team coordinates efforts with CRP team to gauge effectiveness of investments and strategies and redirect funding streams

Fifth Year of Designation as a School in Need of Improvement

All schools in need of improvement

- Implement restructuring plan dictated by school district and PSI team
- Compliance visits to monitor school corrective action plan

Title I schools add:

- Maintain existing 20% set-aside and support for school choice and supplemental educational services
- Implement technical assistance from district
- Continue to provide parental notice regarding teacher qualifications and school classifications

Districts and RIDE PSI team

- Develop plan for restructuring school (**Title I**), which must include at least one of the following:
 - o Reopen school as a public charter school
 - o Replace key staff members, including principal
 - o Enter into contract with private management entity to run school
 - Appoint mentor to assist principal
 - Transfer jurisdiction of school to another LEA
 - o State takeover, or
 - Other major restructuring of school's governance structure

Sixth Year of Designation as a School in Need of Improvement

All schools in need of improvement

- Implement restructuring plan dictated by school district and PSI team
- Compliance visits to monitor school corrective action plan

Title I schools add:

- Implement restructuring plan
- Maintain existing 20% set-aside and support for school choice and supplemental educational services
- Implement technical assistance from district
- Continue to provide parental notice regarding teacher qualifications and school classifications

Districts and RIDE PSI team

- Oversee restructuring plan (**Title I schools**)
- Professional development prescribed for teachers and administrators,
- Special Master, or Mentor appointed

Seventh Year of Designation as a School in Need of Improvement

All schools in need of improvement

- Implement restructuring plan dictated by school district and PSI team
- Compliance visits to monitor school corrective action plan

Title I schools add:

- Implement alternative governance (restructuring) plan
- Maintain existing 20% set-aside and support for school choice and supplemental educational services
- Implement technical assistance from district
- Continue to provide parental notice regarding teacher qualifications and school classifications

Districts and RIDE PSI team

• Compliance visit on restructuring plan

Progressive Support and Intervention Schedule For DISTRICTS In Need of Improvement

Note: Except for the mandated Title I Remedies listed below, these are examples – each district will be addressed based on particularized local circumstances.

First Year of Designation as a District in Need of Improvement (District on "Watch" for Federal Purposes)

All Districts in need of improvement

- Face to Face Meeting to review status of schools in need of improvement and district efforts to support school improvement
- Other intervention activities as authorized by Article 31

Second Year of Designation as a District in Need of Improvement (District Required to Implement Federal Remedies as Applicable)

All Districts in need of improvement:

- Within 3 months of identification, district must develop new or revised district strategic plan, which must:
 - o Incorporate scientifically-based research strategies
 - o Address professional development needs of instructional staff
 - o Include specific measurable achievement goals and targets
 - o Address the fundamental teaching and learning needs in the schools
 - o Incorporate appropriate activities, before school, after school, and during the summer
 - o Specify the responsibilities of RIDE and the district, and
 - o Implement strategies to promote effective parent involvement
- District works with schools to develop action plans
- District supports and resources school's action plans

Title I Districts add:

- Ensure that schools make individualized parent notifications regarding teacher qualifications and school classifications
- 5% set-aside of Title I funds for choice for Title I schools in need of improvement

RIDE PSI team

- Reviews and approves both school and district action plans
- RIDE PSI team forms support agreements with district and, if necessary, for the school

Third Year of Designation as a District in Need of Improvement (District Required to Implement Federal Remedies as Applicable)

All Districts in need of improvement:

- District must implement corrective action plan as may be mandated by RIDE, no later than beginning of school year
- District continues to work with schools to develop action plans
- District continues support and resourcing of school's action plans

Title I Districts add:

- Ensure that schools make individualized parent notifications regarding teacher qualifications and school classifications
- Set-aside of 20% of its Title I funds for choice and supplemental services in Title I schools classified as in need of improvement

RIDE PSI team

- PSI team assigns small intervention teams to work with school
- RIDE staff attend SIT meetings with DSIC
- Reviews and approves both school and district action plans
- PSI team conducts training and support for principal, SIT chair, DSIC
- PSI team may require corrective action plan

Fourth Year of Designation as a District in Need of Improvement (District Required to Implement Federal Remedies as Applicable)

All Districts in need of improvement:

- Prescribed course for teachers in standards-based, learning-differentiated instruction
- Mandated DSIC responsibilities
- District updates and continues to implement strategic plan
- District continues to work with schools to develop and evaluate action plans
- District continues support and resourcing of school's action plans

Title I Districts add:

- Ensure that schools make individualized parent notifications regarding teacher qualifications and school classifications
- Set-aside of 20% of its Title I funds for choice and supplemental services in Title I schools classified as in need of improvement

RIDE PSI team

- PSI team assigns small intervention teams to work with DSIC (technical assistance)
- PSI team oversees continued implementation of district strategic plan, requires program evaluation components as necessary to inform corrective action
- RIDE, DSIC, SIT create plan for corrective action

Fifth Year of Designation as a District in Need of Improvement (District Required to Implement Federal Remedies as Applicable)

All Districts in need of improvement:

- District updates and continues to implement strategic plan
- District continues to work with schools to develop and evaluate action plans
- District continues support and resourcing of school's action plans
- Additional regulatory requirements may be imposed

Title I Districts add:

- Ensure that schools make individualized parent notifications regarding teacher qualifications and school classifications
- Set-aside of 20% of its Title I funds for choice and supplemental services in Title I schools classified as in need of improvement
- Must implement corrective action mandated by state

RIDE PSI team

- RIDE <u>must</u> take corrective action with districts receiving **Title I** funds, which must include at least one of the following:
 - o Defer programmatic funds or reduce administrative funds
 - Institute and fully implement a new curriculum based on State and local content and academic achievement standards, including the provision of appropriate professional development for all relevant staff
 - Replace district personnel who are relevant to the failure of the district to make adequate yearly progress
 - o Remove particular schools from the jurisdiction of the district and establish an alternate arrangement for public governance and supervision of those schools
 - Appoint a receiver or trustee to administer the affairs of the district in the place of the superintendent and school committee
 - o Abolish or restructure the school district, OR
 - O Authorize students to transfer to another school district and provide to these students transportation, or the costs of transportation, to the other school
- PSI team maintains small intervention teams to work with DSIC
- PSI team oversees continued implementation of district strategic plan, requires program evaluation components as necessary to inform corrective action